

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 39-68 are now present in this application. Claims 39, 51, 57, and 59 are independent. By this amendment, claims 1-17 and 22-35 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 39-68 have been added. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Request for Withdrawal of Finality of Office Action

Applicants respectfully submit that this Amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the finality of the previous Office Action, and an Office Action on the merits with respect to claims 39-68 are respectfully requested.

Examiner Interview

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Heckert for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representatives during a telephone conference call on June 23, 2008 to provide a general outline for a personal interview scheduled June 26, 2008. Applicants also thank Examiner Heckert for the courtesies extended to Applicants and Applicants' representatives during the personal interview which was conducted on June 26, 2008. An Examiner Interview Summary was made of record as Paper No. 20080625. During the interview, Applicants presented a presentation that outlined general features of the technology and claim amendments were proposed to distinguish the claimed invention over the cited references.

Applicants proposed amending independent claim 1 to recite a combination of steps in a washing method in a steam injection washing machine having a cabinet, a wash tub located in the cabinet, and a wash drum located in the wash tub, the method including supplying wash water to the wash tub, and tumbling the laundry in the wash drum by rotating the wash drum. The method also including generating steam by a steam generator located in the cabinet and

injecting steam generated by the steam generator into the wash tub at a top portion of the wash tub while tumbling the laundry.

Applicants also proposed amending independent claim 14 to recite a combination of steps in a washing method in a steam injection washing machine having a cabinet, a wash tub located in the cabinet, and a wash drum located in the wash tub, the method including supplying wash water to laundry located in the wash drum, spraying wash water from a bottom portion of the wash tub into the wash tub, tumbling laundry located in the wash drum by rotating the wash drum, supplying water into a steam generator located in the cabinet to generate steam, and injecting the generated steam into the wash tub at a top portion of the wash tub while tumbling the laundry.

Similarly, Applicants proposed amending independent claim 22 to recite a combination of steps in a washing method in a steam injection washing machine having a cabinet, a wash tub located in the cabinet, and a wash drum located in the wash tub, the method including performing a washing process on laundry located in the wash drum including supplying wash water to the wash tub and tumbling the laundry by rotating the wash drum when wash water is in the wash tub. The method also includes supplying water into a steam generator located in the cabinet, generating steam from the supplied water by the steam generator, and injecting the generated steam into the wash drum at a top portion of the wash drum to impinge on the laundry while tumbling the laundry.

Finally, Applicants proposed amending independent claim 24 to recite a combination of steps in a washing method in a washing machine having a cabinet, a wash tub located in the cabinet, and a wash drum located in the wash tub, the method including supplying wash water to laundry located in the wash drum, spraying the wash water from a bottom portion of the wash tub into the wash tub, tumbling laundry located in the wash drum by rotating the wash drum, supplying water into a steam generator located in the cabinet to generate steam, and injecting steam into the wash drum at the top of the wash drum to impinge on the laundry while tumbling the laundry.

Applicants argued that neither Sulzmann nor Nakamura disclosed providing steam at a top portion of the wash drum while tumbling the laundry. In particular, Nakamura discloses

utilizing steam to spot treat laundry that is held between a lid and a cabinet of a vertical axis laundry machine while tumbling laundry in the wash drum.

In addition, Examiner Heckert directed Applicants attention to EP 835, 250 during the telephone interview on June 23, 2008. During the personal interview on June 26, 2008, Applicants indicated that while Fig. 3 shows a steam supply line 21, the source of steam is outside of the cabinet. Furthermore, it is not clear where the steam is delivered to inside the washing machine. Applicants note that Fig. 1 shows two supply lines that have quick action levers, and as such, the supply lines correspond to a hot detergent solution and cold water.

New independent claims 39, 51, 57, and 63 have been prepared based on the proposed claim amendments to independent claims 1, 14, 22, and 24, respectively. Because the new claims include the subject matter discussed during the interview, Applicants submit that the § 103 rejections have been overcome. Applicants believe that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-17 and 22-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sulzmann in view of Nakamura. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-17 and 22-35 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that the new independent claims 39, 51, 57, and 63 incorporate the subject matter discussed during the Examiner Interview and are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Sulzmann and Nakamura, as discussed more fully during the Examiner Interview discussed above.

With regard to dependent claims 40-50, 52-56, 58-62, and 64-68, Applicants submit that these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 39, 51, 57, or 63,

which are allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore these claims are allowable based on their dependence from claim 39, 51, 57, and 63, as well as for their additionally recited subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

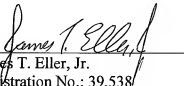
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells., Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 21, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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